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# First-Year Student Research Skills: Challenges, Myths, and Solutions

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Created at the Wright State University Libraries, 2014.

These materials were designed to be used with Wright State University first-year students or faculty of first-year students to improve research skills.

Project Team:

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# First-Year Student Research Skills

**Challenges, Myths, and Solutions**



# Big Challenge for First-Year Students



Research ?!#@?%

# Agenda:

- ✓ **Project Information Literacy overview**
- ✓ **Research challenges of first-year students**
- ✓ **PIL results and WSU student results**
- ✓ **How we can help**



# Learning the Ropes

How Freshmen Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College

Alison J. Head, Ph.D.

December 5, 2013




*I'm  
overwhelmed!*

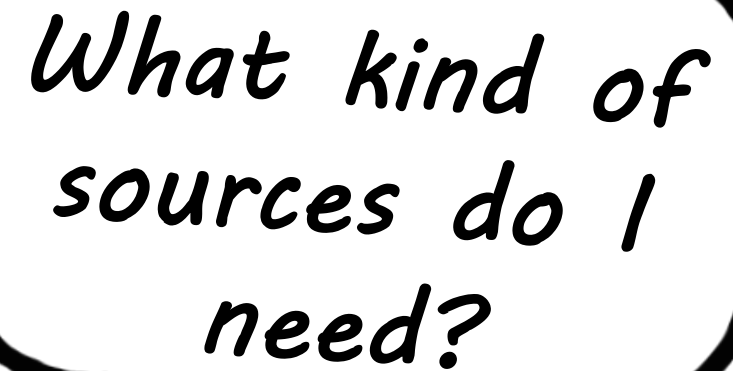


*But,  
I'm excited!*





Do I have  
enough  
information?



What kind of  
sources do I  
need?



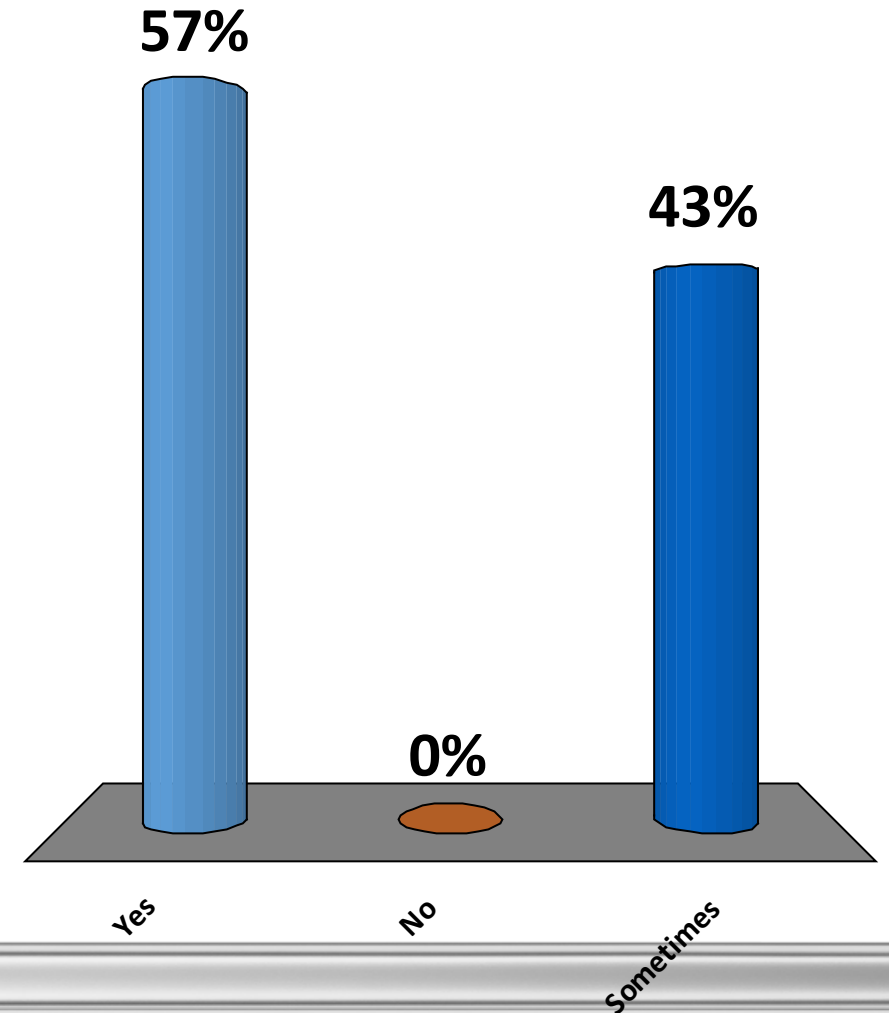
What's  
APA?

# I find students' lack of research experience frustrating

A. Yes

B. No

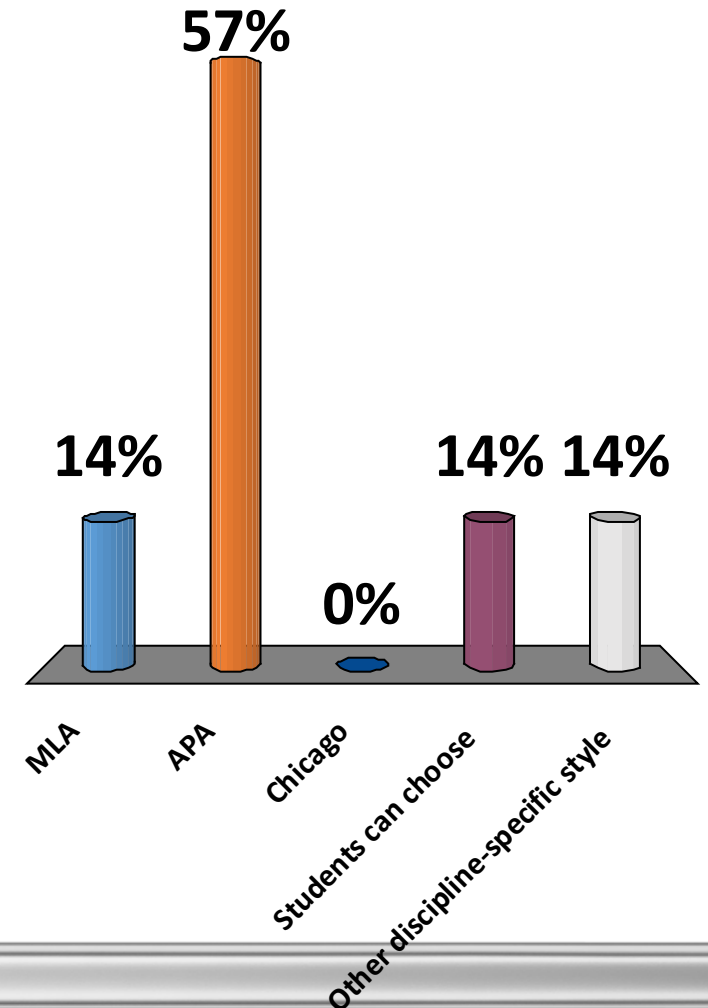
C. Sometimes





# I require this citation style most often

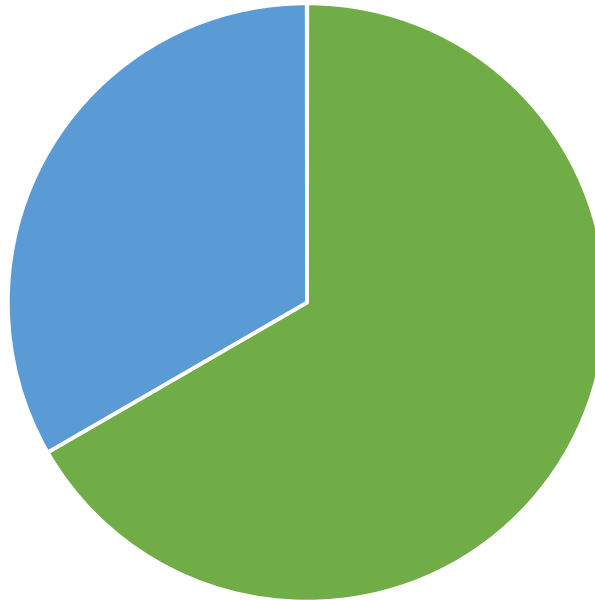
- A. MLA
- B. APA
- C. Chicago
- D. Students can choose
- E. Other discipline-specific style



I require the following sources:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to list the sources they require. It occupies the lower half of the slide.

1/3 of Students are Uncertain  
about Faculty Expectations



# Freshman Myths

5 recurring misconceptions about college level research process



Myth #1

I'm independent.  
It's unacceptable to ask for help.



Myth #2

Everything's online;  
I don't need to go to the library.



Myth #3

Librarians are only for  
students who get stuck.



Myth #4

The database the librarian  
recommended is the only source  
I should use.





Myth #5

Dusty old books,  
nothing relevant to my research!

# Major Findings

And solutions!

*Wow, this library  
is huge!*

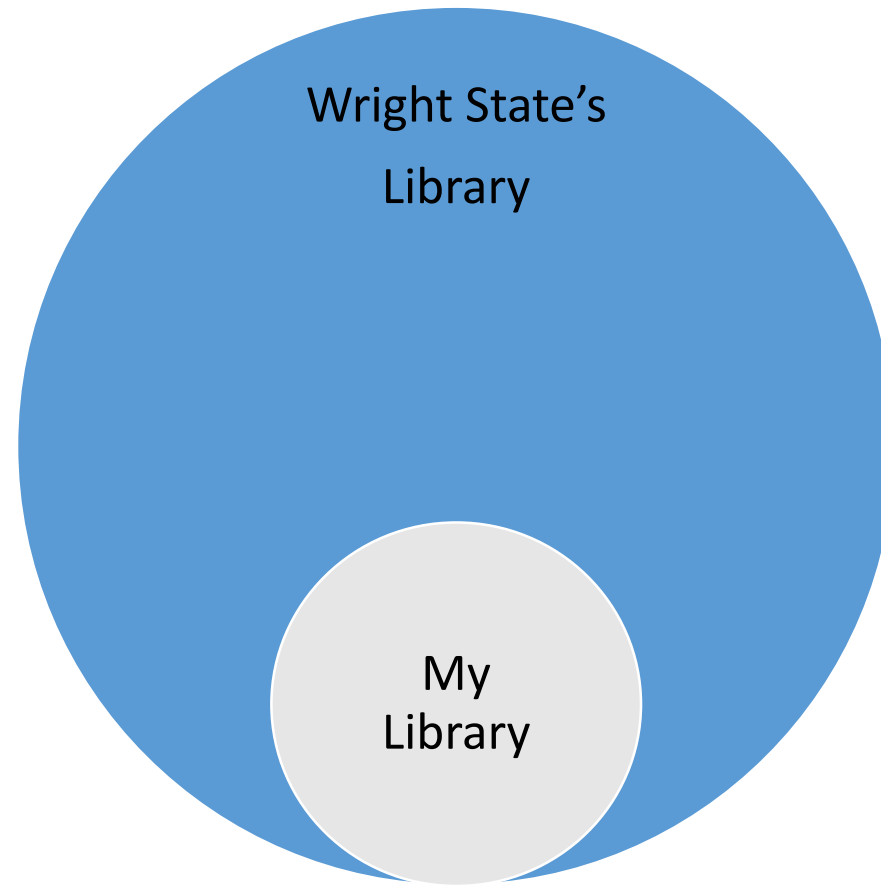


9 times more books

10 times more computers

20 times more librarians

21 times more databases



# Struggles of First-Year Students

- ✓ Defining/selecting a topic
- ✓ Constructing searches
- ✓ Locating relevant sources
- ✓ Making sense of it all

# PIL Study – Students' Responses:

**37%** could not define and select a topic

**74%** struggled to construct searches

**57%** could not locate relevant sources

**43%** struggled to make sense of sources they found

What challenges do you  
face when finding and using  
information?

# ENG1100 Learning Objectives

- Constructing & implementing effective [search strategies](#)
- Identifying [keywords](#), synonyms and related terms
- Exploring a general [information source](#) to increase familiarity with a topic

What did you learn?

What will be the hardest part?

## ENG1100 Minute Paper

[Home](#) [Print Page](#)

### ENG1100MinutePaper

## ENG1100 Minute Paper

Name or describe the research strategies you learned today

What do you think will be the hardest part of doing research for this project or class?

What is your ENG1100 instructor's last name?



# WSU ENG1100 Assessment Results:

What did you learn today?

81% construct and implement effective search strategies

67% identify keywords, synonyms, and related terms

# WSU ENG1100 Assessment Results:

**14%** define and select a topic

**5%** constructing searches

**2%** locate relevant sources

**23%** struggle to make sense of sources they found

What will be the hardest part?

# WSU ENG1100 Assessment Results:

46%

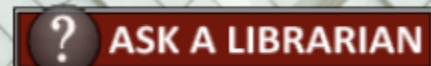
ENG1100 classes with library visit

14% define and select a topic

5% constructing searches

2% locate relevant sources

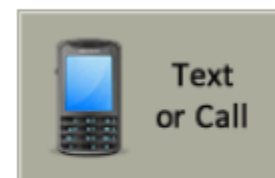
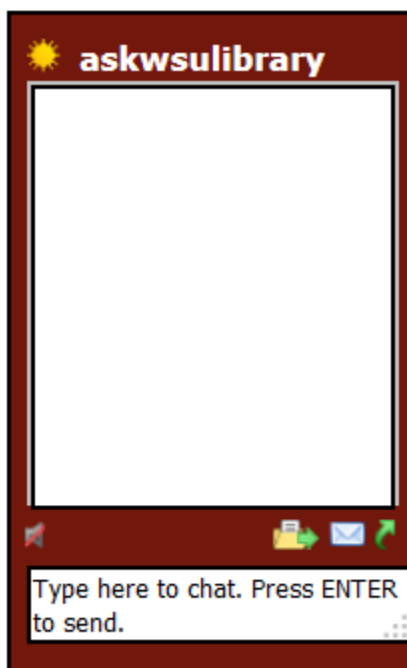
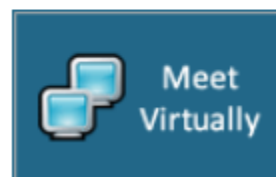
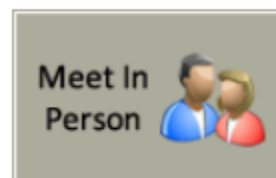
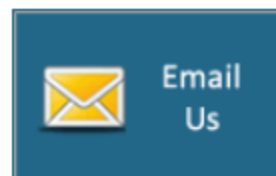
23% struggle to make sense of sources they found



### Ask a Librarian

- » [Email Us](#)
- » [Chat With Us](#)
- » [Text or Call Us](#)
- » [Meet with Us](#)
- » [In Person](#)
- » [Virtually](#)
- » [Research Quick Start](#)
- » [Chat Privacy Policy](#)

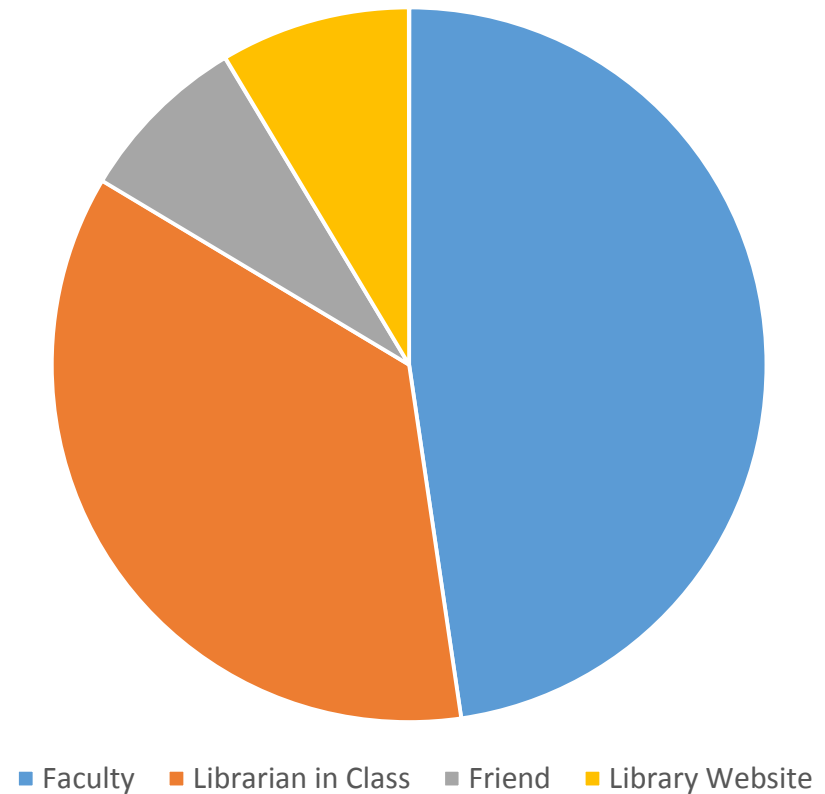
### Ask A Librarian



# Faculty Members are Role Models

700 appointments last year

How did you hear about research consultations with a librarian?



# Research Appointment with Librarian Feedback

*The assistance I received fulfilled my needs*

*I learned research skills and techniques I can use later*

*I am likely to use the library in the future*



# Research Appointment with Librarian Feedback

**99%** *The assistance I received fulfilled my needs*

**98%** *I learned research skills and techniques I can use later*

**99%** *I am likely to use the library in future*

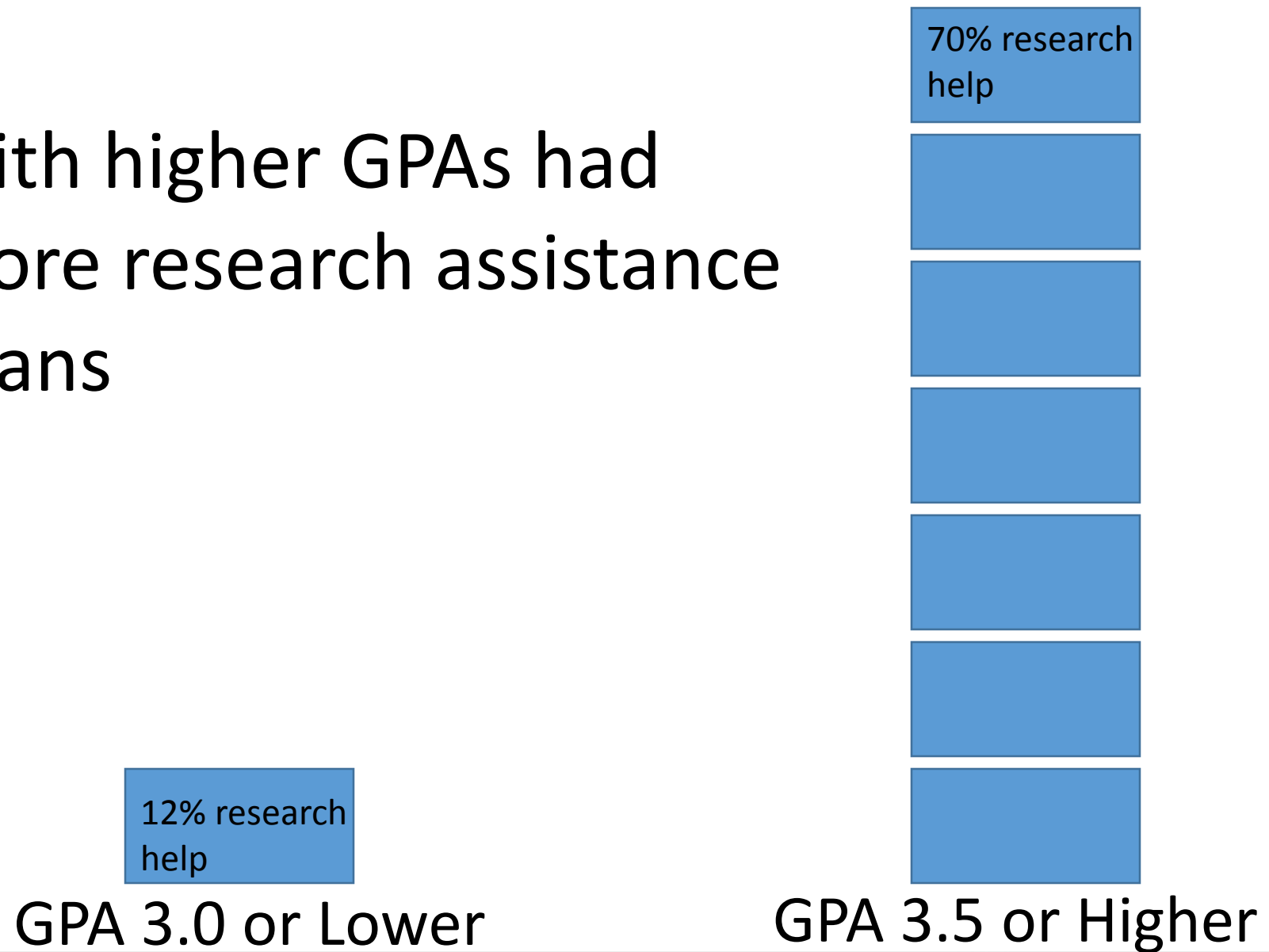


*Students who use  
the library are  
more successful!*





Students with higher GPAs had received more research assistance from librarians



# Resetting Expectations

“The cognitive skills needed for scholarly inquiry are very different than finding ready-made answers using a Google search.”

How to get rid of those crappy  
research papers

~~How to get rid of those crappy  
research papers~~

# Research Toolkit



- 8 workshops
- Interactive
- Assessment
- Certificates and records of attendance
- More information on our website

# Help Improve First-Year Student Research



Invite a librarian for instruction

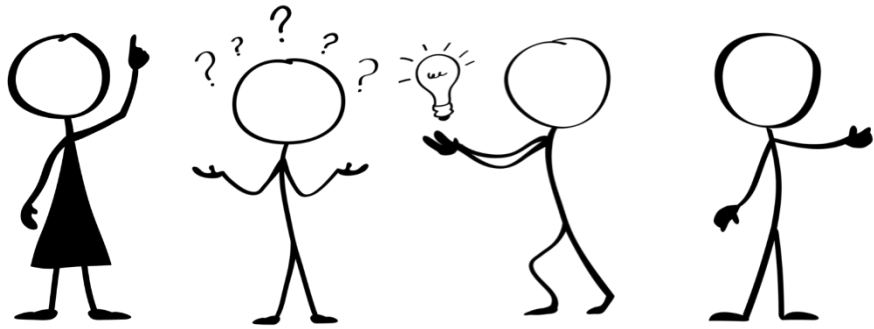


Recommend library workshops



Continue dialogue with us

# Thank You!



## Project Team

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